

Media Release

Site confirmed for Canterbury Earthquake Memorial

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The formal memorial for the February 2011 Earthquake will be built on the edge of the Ōtākaro/Avon River.

Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee made the announcement today, alongside Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel and Kaiwhakahaere for Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Tā Mark Solomon.

The Canterbury Earthquake Memorial will honour the lives of those who died in the earthquake, acknowledge the trauma of people who experienced the earthquake and recognise those who helped in the rescue and recovery operation in the hours and days following the February 22 quake.

The chosen site will be part of the Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct between Montreal Street and Rhododendron Island. The site was selected following feedback from bereaved family members, which showed common themes of a wish for the memorial to incorporate water, trees and greenery. The site also fits the criteria of being easy to access from the central city, and in a peaceful and reflective setting.

"We have been conscious that we want a memorial in a location that can be meaningful for all those who were affected by the tragedy rather than placing any emphasis on any particular site where lives were lost," Minister Brownlee says.

"This is a national memorial, so by choosing to locate it in the new Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct, we are ensuring that this becomes a special place for all New Zealanders."

Ta Mark Solomon says, "The Ōtākaro/Avon River has supported our people for centuries as a meeting place and mahinga kai. We believe it is appropriate that the river continues to support the people of Canterbury by providing a beautiful setting for a place of remembrance."

Mayor Lianne Dalziel says the events of February 22 2011 have had an immeasurable impact on the people of Christchurch, and affected people across the world.

"Choosing a site for the memorial is a significant step forward to having a dedicated special place where people can come and reflect and remember all those we lost, and everything that people everywhere have been through on that day, and since.

"We have gained so much strength from coming together since the earthquake, both in our grief and in our optimism for the future of Christchurch, and it will be wonderful to have a Memorial space where we can share our memories, experiences and hopes."

The Government has set aside up to \$10 million for the Memorial, along with \$1 million from the Mayoral Relief Fund.

The shape of the Memorial will be decided through an open design process. The first stage of this three-stage process is being launched today, called 'Ideas to Remember'.

This announcement was originally published on ccdu.govt.nz and beehive.govt.nz

It calls for people to submit their ideas of what the memorial should be – open to anyone of any age, across the world.

"We anticipate this process will generate hundreds of ideas, and we very much look forward to seeing people's creativity and vision for a unique and fitting Memorial," Mr Brownlee says.

The second stage of the Earthquake Memorial design will see the Ideas To Remember narrowed down to six, and those shortlisted will then be invited to further develop their design ideas.

The favoured design at the end of that process will become the Canterbury Earthquake Memorial.